

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 21 has been amended as follows:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Original): A method for deamidating a milk protein comprising bringing a denatured milk protein into contact with an enzyme which exerts a deamidating effect by acting directly on an amide group of a protein without cleaving a peptide bond or crosslinking the protein.

Claim 2 (Original): A method according to Claim 1 wherein said enzyme is an enzyme having said effect on a protein having a molecular weight of 5,000 or more.

Claim 3 (Original): A method according to Claim 1 wherein said enzyme is an enzyme having said effect on a protein having a molecular weight of 10,000 or more.

Claim 4 (Original): A method according to Claim 1 wherein said enzyme is derived from a microorganism.

Claim 5 (Original): A method according to Claim 4 wherein said microorganism belongs to a genus of Chryseobacterium, Flavobacterium, Empedobacter, Sphingobacterium, Aureobacterium

or Myroides.

Claim 6 (Original): A method according to Claim 4 wherein said microorganism is Chryseobacterium sp. No. 9670 (FERM BP-7351) belonging to the genus of Chryseobacterium.

Claim 7 (Original): A method according to Claim 1 wherein said denatured milk protein is a denatured milk protein obtained by a denaturation treatment with one or more selected from the group consisting of heat, pressure, acid, alkali, denaturing agent, oxidant, reducing agent and chelating agent.

Claim 8 (Original): A method for producing a deamidated milk protein comprising:
a step for denaturing a milk protein; and,
a step for deamidating a denatured milk protein obtained in the previous step by bringing said denatured milk protein into contact with an enzyme which exerts a deamidating effect by acting directly on an amide group of a protein without cleaving a peptide bond or crosslinking the protein.

Claim 9 (Original): A method according to Claim 8 wherein said enzyme is an enzyme having said effect on a protein having a molecular weight of 5,000 or more.

Claim 10 (Original): A method according to Claim 8 wherein said enzyme is an enzyme having said effect on a protein having a molecular weight of 10,000 or more.

Claim 11 (Original): A method according to Claim 8 wherein said enzyme is derived from a microorganism.

Claim 12 (Original): A method according to Claim 11 wherein said microorganism belongs to a genus of Chryseobacterium, Flavobacterium, Empedobacter, Sphingobacterium, Aureobacterium or Myroides.

Claim 13 (Original): A method according to Claim 11 wherein said microorganism is Chryseobacterium sp. No. 9670 (FERM BP-7351) belonging to the genus of Chryseobacterium.

Claim 14 (Original): A method according to Claim 11 wherein said step for the denaturation consists of a treatment with one or more selected from the group consisting of heat, pressure, acid, alkali, denaturing agent, oxidant, reducing agent and chelating agent.

Claim 15 (Original): A method for denaturing a milk protein comprising bringing a milk protein into contact with an enzyme which exerts a deamidating effect by acting directly on an amide group of a protein without cleaving a peptide bond or crosslinking the protein.

Claim 16 (Original): A method according to Claim 15 wherein said enzyme is an enzyme having said effect on a protein having a molecular weight of 5,000 or more.

Claim 17 (Original): A method according to Claim 15 wherein said enzyme is an enzyme having said effect on a protein having a molecular weight of 10,000 or more.

Claim 18 (Original): A method according to Claim 15 wherein said enzyme is derived from a microorganism.

Claim 19 (Original): A method according to Claim 18 wherein said microorganism belongs to a genus of Chryseobacterium, Flavobacterium, Empedobacter, Sphingobacterium, Aureobacterium or Myroides.

Claim 20 (Original): A method according to Claim 18 wherein said microorganism is Chryseobacterium sp. No. 9670 (FERM BP-7351) belonging to the genus of Chryseobacterium.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A method for producing a protein degradation product comprising a step for denaturing a protein by a method according to any one of ~~Claims 15 to 20~~

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/648,806

Claim 15 and a step for bringing a denatured protein obtained in the previous step into contact with a protease.